

1 1. A guide needle for improving trocar placement comprising:

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3 an elongate member including a proximal end and a sharp beveled distal
4 tip for puncturing and cutting tissue, wherein the member includes an axial
5 bore throughout the length of the member;

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7 a handle at the proximal end of the member;

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9 means for indicating the depth to which the member has been inserted into
10 the tissue; and

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12 means for preventing unintended puncturing and cutting by the sharp
13 beveled distal tip.

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15 2. The guide needle of claim 1, wherein the member is substantially tubular in
16 shape.

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18 3. The guide needle of claim 2, wherein the member is preferably between 16 gauge
19 and 18 gauge in diameter.

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21 4. The guide needle of claim 1, wherein the member is preferably between 33 cm
22 and 37 cm in length.

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24 5. The guide needle of claim 1, wherein the depth indicating means comprises:
25 visible gradations at measured intervals along the member.

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27 6. The guide needle of claim 5, wherein the depth indicating means further
28 comprises:

29 a pointer mechanism lockable to the member at any visible graduation.

1 7. The guide needle of claim 6, wherein the pointer mechanism comprises a
2 slideably movable ring disposed circumferentially about the member and
3 including means for locking the position of the ring at any visible gradation along
4 the member.

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6 8. The guide needle of claim 1, wherein the preventing means comprises:
7 a stylet assembly telescopically disposed within the axial bore of the
8 member, wherein the stylet assembly includes a blunt tip extendable to a
9 first position beyond the beveled distal tip of the member and retractable
10 to a second position within the axial bore.

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12 9. The guide needle of claim 8, wherein the preventing means further comprises:
13 a stylet control mechanism located on or near the handle of the member
14 for manually extending to the first position or retracting to the second
15 position the stylet blunt tip.

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17 10. The guide needle of claim 8, wherein the preventing means further comprising:
18 a spring biasing mechanism for automatically to the first position the stylet
19 blunt tip when no opposing resistive force is applied to the stylet blunt tip.

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21 11. The guide needle of claim 1, further comprising a guard enveloping the member,
22 handle and stylet assembly.

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24 12. A method for minimizing trauma to a patient undergoing laparoscopic surgery,
25 comprising the steps of:
26 insufflating an anatomical target region;
27 inserting a narrow width guide needle with a depth indicator into the target
28 region;

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1 determining whether the insertion of the guide needle has resulted in
2 optimal angular and depth positioning;
3 if the insertion is not optimal, extracting and reinserting the guide needle
4 until optimal positioning has been achieved, then noting the optimal depth
5 and extracting the guide needle; and
6 inserting a trocar in the precise position of guide needle insertion that was
7 determined to be optimal.

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2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176